

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel Claims 6, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 20 without prejudice or disclaimer of subject matter, and amend the claims as shown below. The claims, as pending in the subject application, read as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) An image search apparatus which searches for an image ~~by using, the apparatus comprising:~~

image storage means for storing a plurality of images;[[,]]

region information storage means for storing partial images included in the respective images stored in the image storage means in correspondence with the respective images, ~~and;~~

region feature storage means for storing features of the partial images stored in the region information storage means in correspondence with the partial images; ~~comprising;~~

~~image feature designation means for designating a feature of a search target image~~ receiving means for receiving a feature of a search target image as a search condition to search for an image;

~~candidate image determination search means for searching for features of partial images in the region feature storage means on the basis of the feature of the image which is designated by said image feature designation means, and determining an image including a partial image which is made to correspond to a partial image obtained on the basis of a search result as a candidate image from the images stored in the image storage means~~ contains the feature received by said receiving means as a candidate image; and

search result display means for displaying ~~a reduced image of the candidate image which corresponds to said search condition, determined by said candidate image determination means, wherein said search result display means displays a reduced image of the candidate image upon enlarging~~ while emphasizing the partial image included in the candidate image.

2. (Currently Amended) The apparatus according to claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein when a plurality of candidate images are obtained on the basis of a search result, said search result display means displays reduced images of the plurality of candidate images in the form of a list.

3. (Currently Amended) The apparatus according to claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein said search result display means displays ~~a reduced image of~~ the candidate image upon enlarging a plurality of partial images included in the candidate image.

4. (Currently Amended) The apparatus according to claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein said search result display means synthesizes ~~the~~ a plurality of partial images from the plurality of images to generate a new single partial image, and displays the new single partial image as a reduced image.

5. (Currently Amended) The apparatus according to claim 4,

~~characterized in that~~ wherein said search result display means generates a new single partial image by synthesizing ~~the~~ a plurality of partial images from the plurality of images while keeping a relative positional relationship between the plurality of partial images is kept.

6. (Cancelled)

7. (Currently Amended) The apparatus according to claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein sizes of ~~the~~ a plurality of partial images from the plurality of images are unified to a predetermined size.

8. to 11. (Cancelled)

12. (Currently Amended) The apparatus according to claim 1 [[8]], ~~characterized in that~~ wherein said search result display means alternately displays a plurality of candidate images ~~the reduced images~~ at the same position one by one in an automatic manner.

13. (Currently Amended) The apparatus according to claim 1 [[8]], ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the apparatus further comprises switching means for switching display of a plurality of candidate images ~~the reduced images~~ in said search result display means, and

said search result display means alternately displays the plurality of candidate images ~~the reduced images~~ at the same position one by one on the basis of a switching instruction from said switching means.

14. (Currently Amended) The apparatus according to claim 1, characterized in that wherein said search result display means displays the ~~reduced~~ candidate image in an area with a predetermined size.

15. (Currently Amended) The apparatus according to claim 1, characterized in that ~~the partial image comprises a rectangular image having a region surrounded by a circumscribed rectangle of a predetermined object region included in the image~~ wherein said search result display means displays a circumscribed rectangular image surrounding each partial image searched out by said search means.

16. (Currently Amended) The apparatus according to claim 1, characterized in that wherein said search result display means displays a reduced image of the candidate image while ~~emphasizing~~ superimposing the emphasized partial image ~~included in~~ on the candidate image.

17. (Currently Amended) The apparatus according to claim 1, characterized in that wherein the region feature storage means stores, as a feature of the image, at least one of concept information expressing a concept obtained from the partial image, ~~language~~ text information expressing the concept ~~in a language~~ of the partial image,

and an image feature expressing a feature of the partial image, ~~and a combination of the concept information, the language information, and the image feature.~~

18. (Currently Amended) An image search method for an image search apparatus which can be connected to

an image storage unit which stores a plurality of images,

a region information storage unit which stores partial images included in the respective images stored in the image storage unit in correspondence with the respective images, and

a region feature storage unit which stores features of the partial images stored in the region information storage unit in correspondence with the partial images, said method comprising:

~~an image feature designation step of designating a feature of a search target image~~ a receiving step of receiving a feature of a search target image as a search condition to search for an image;

~~a candidate image determination~~ a search step of searching for features of partial images in the region feature storage unit on the basis of the designated feature of the image; and determining an image including a partial image which is made to correspond to a partial image obtained on the basis of a search result as a candidate image from the images stored in the image storage unit contains the feature received by said receiving step as a candidate image; and

a search result display step of displaying the candidate image which corresponds to said search condition, while emphasizing enlarging the partial image included in the determined candidate image and displaying a reduced image of the candidate image.

19. to 21. (Cancelled)

22. (Currently Amended) A computer readable recording medium storing a program for causing a computer, which can be connected to
an image storage unit which stores a plurality of images,
a region information storage unit which stores partial images
included in the respective images stored in the image storage unit in correspondence with the respective images, and

a region feature storage unit which stores features of the partial images in the region information storage unit in correspondence with the partial images, the program causing the computer to execute;

an image feature designation step of designating a feature of a search target image a receiving step of receiving a feature of a search target image as a search condition to search for an image;

a candidate image determination a search step of searching for features of partial images in the region feature storage unit on the basis of the designated feature of the image, and determining an image including a partial image which is made to correspond to a partial image obtained on the basis of a search result as a candidate image from the images

stored in the image storage unit contains the feature received by said receiving step as a candidate image; and

a search result display step of displaying the candidate image which corresponds to said search condition, while emphasizing enlarging the partial image included in the ~~determined~~ candidate image ~~and displaying a reduced image of the candidate~~ image.